THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Government has on several occasions proposed to the Chinese side an alternate route for the Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra through Demchok in Jammu & Kashmir. In response, the Chinese side has conveyed that it would not be feasible to open an alternate route through Demchok on account of poor road conditions, frequent landslides, high altitudes and lack of infrastructure in that uninhabited remote region of Tibet. The Chinese side also conveyed that they had examined other alternatives, but none of them had been found feasible due to rapidly changing natural and weather conditions.

During the visit of Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji to India in January 2002, the Indian side again requested the Chinese side to upgrade facilities for the Yatra on their side and for the opening of a second route. The Chinese side said that utmost efforts are being made and that China will continue to make such efforts in the future.

"Jaipur Foot" for Afghanis Maimed in War

1239. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether well-known Indian Orthopaedic Surgeons have been sent to Kabul, Afghanistan for organising camp to fit artificial limbs, "Jaipur Foot" to the Afghan maimed in war;

(b) if so, what times these surgeons are likely to stay there; and

(c) the other details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (c) A team of doctors and technicians had gone to Kabul, Afghanistan on 30th December, 2001 to run a camp for fixing artificial limbs, Jaipur foot, on Afghan amputees. The team successfully completed its task and fixed 1000 artificial limbs in a period of about one-month and returned to India on 9th February 2002.